CHAPTER IX

LATER BUDDHISTIC SCHOOLS

We know that there was some vagueness in Buddhism as it was originally taught. It was this vagueness, combined with the wide and rapid spread of its teaching not only in the country of its birth but also outside, that in course of time gave rise to a great divergence of views among its followers. There are several schools mentioned by Buddhist tradition, the number of those that arose in India itself being as many as eighteen; but we shall take into consideration here only the most important among them—especially those that are commonly mentioned in Hindu and Jaina philosophical works and may therefore be regarded as of particular significance in Indian thought, whose development we are tracing here. The various views falling under later Buddhism are broadly classifiable under two heads, which go by the name of Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. These terms are variously explained, the most common explanation being that they signify respectively the 'small way' and the 'great way' of salvation. It is clear from the inferiority indicated by the word hīna ('low') that the names were devised by the followers of Mahāyāna. Of these, the Hīnayāna had an earlier origin; but the distinction between the two is not merely one of chronology. In their philosophic and ethical outlook also they differ widely. For instance the adherents of Hīnayāna believe in the reality of outward objects—however they may conceive of reality itself—and are for that reason often described in Hindu works as sarvāstivāda-vādins, while the adherents of Mahāyāna adopt the opposite view. Another important difference is that while the Hīnayāna is content to stop at pointing out the means for the individual releasing himself from the bondage of samsāra, the Mahāyāna teaches that the

1 BP. pp. 149-50.
2 Cf. Śaṅkara on VS. II. ii. 18. In Buddhistic tradition the term is sarvāstivāda.
awakened individual should work, without resting, for the spiritual welfare of the world. Such radical differences between the two forms of the doctrine in essential matters have led some to suggest that the Mahāyāna has been influenced by alien thought; and the suggestion may look plausible as there were foreign incursions into India in the formative stages of this phase of Buddhism. Without entering into the merits of this historical question, we may state that it is not at all difficult to account for the development of the characteristic tenets of Mahāyānism from the ideas latent in early Buddhism. The exponents of Mahāyāna were themselves of this opinion, and held that their doctrine represented the whole truth of Buddha's teaching, ascribing the variations found in the Hinayāna schools either to an attempt on the part of the Master at adjusting the teaching to less qualified disciples or to inability on the part of the latter to grasp its complete significance. Whatever the truth may be, both forms of the doctrine alike exhibit several important changes and neither can be taken as representing exactly the teaching as it was originally imparted. In our present treatment, we shall refer only to the new developments and shall not dwell upon points already mentioned in the chapter on early Buddhism.

Several Buddhistic works of this period are written in Sanskrit. Some of them are probably renderings from Pāli originals, which shows that Buddhism gradually assumed a more and more scholastic character, although this should not be taken to mean that it ceased to exist as a popular creed. Buddha, as we have seen, preferred to dwell upon the practical bearing of his teaching passing over the theory underlying it. There springs up now a remarkable development of theoretic interest which for its keenness is almost unrivalled in the whole history of thought. This result is in no small measure due to the sharp conflict that gradually developed between the Buddhists and their Hindu opponents—a conflict in which each party gained and through which Indian speculation as a whole became much richer and

1 See V. A. Smith: Early History of India, p. 266 (3rd Edn.).
2 Cf. Śaṅkara on VS. II. ii. 18; BP. pp. 216–221.
more varied than it would otherwise have been. All the different shades of philosophic theory—realistic and idealistic—are found within Buddhism itself; and we have, so to speak, philosophy repeated twice over in India—once in the several Hindu systems and again in the different schools of Buddhism. The prominence which the Buddhistic schools acquired gradually declined chiefly under the stress of strengthening Hindu thought. To judge from extant Sanskrit literature, the first great onslaught, so far as the scholastic side of the teaching was concerned, came from Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (A.D. 700) and it was continued by Śaṁkara and others with the result that the doctrine once for all lost its hold on the Indian mind. In regard to minor points of a purely technical character, controversies were carried on for some time longer; but from the twelfth century onwards the discussions of Buddhistic thought in the various Hindu schools became for the most part academic and unreal. For the history of this great teaching after that time, we should look outside India—in Tibet, China and Japan.

The literature bearing upon the later phase of Buddhism, which began to appear as early as the first or second century A.D., is vast; and we can refer here only to a small portion of it, remarking by the way that several of the works in Sanskrit have been lost. To take only the four schools (p. 183) to which we confine our attention here: The chief exponents of the Vaibhāṣika views were Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. The former is usually assigned to about 500 A.D. His works, such as the Pramāṇa-samuccaya, in their Sanskrit form are not extant. The latter is known as an interpreter of Diṅnāga and is anterior to Śaṁkara. His Nyāya-bindu, which is a treatise on logic, is available, as also a very valuable commentary upon it by Dharmottara. Numerous quotations from the works of these two thinkers are found cited by Hindu writers. Kumāralabdha (A.D. 200)

1 Some of the works lost have in recent times been fortunately recovered in translations in Chinese and Tibetan.
2 See Nayana-prasādini on Citsukha's Tattva-pradipikā, p. 244 (Nirṇayasāgara Press):—Vaibhāṣikāṇāṁ sutra-kṛto Diṅnāgasya.
3 BP. p. 156 n.
is reputed to have been the founder of the Sautrāntika school, between which and the Vaibhāṣika it is not always easy to discover the dividing line. The chief teachers of the Yogācāra\(^1\) school were Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, who were brothers and flourished probably in the third century A.D. Vasubandhu seems to have started as a Sautrāntika and to have been afterwards converted into an idealist under the influence of his brother. His *Abhidharma-kośa* with his own commentary—only partly preserved in Sanskrit—is a source of great authority not only on this school but on the Buddhistic doctrine as a whole. ‘It covers the whole field of ontology, psychology, cosmology, the doctrine of salvation and of the saints, and a vast proportion of its matter is common to all Buddhistic belief.’\(^2\) Another of the chief works of this school is *Laṅkāvatāra*, so called because the teaching there is fictitiously represented as having been imparted by Buddha to Rāvana, the demon king of Laṅkā. The chief exponent of the last school—the Mādhyamika—is the renowned Nāgārjuna, who was probably a pupil of Aśvaghoṣa (A.D. 100),\(^3\) the saintly preceptor of King Kaniska and also a celebrated Sanskrit poet and dramatist rivalling in fame the great Kālidāsa himself. Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyama-kārikā* with the commentary of Candrakīrti, which is only one of several upon it, has been published and is a most valuable work in the whole range of Sanskrit philosophical literature. The *Sata-sāstra* or *Catuḥ-sataka* of Āryadeva, a pupil of Nāgārjuna, is another important work belonging to the same school.

I

The Čārvāka rejects inference (p. 189) on the ground that there is no warrant for assuming the validity of the inductive truth from which it proceeds. The Buddhist adduces cogent reasons against such a position. He does not indeed believe in all the types of vyāpti or inductive relation recognized by the Hindu logicians; but he does not discard the notion itself as the Čārvāka does. A general statement relating two things

\(^{1}\) BP. pp. 155 and 230. \(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 156. \(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 229.
or events must be admitted to be true, according to the Buddhist, when it is based upon a principle which is universally accepted and is made the ground of everyday activity. To question a statement thus supported would be to question the very foundation of practical life, which is clearly a stultifying position for any disputant to assume. The Buddhist refers in this connection to a maxim\(^1\) — vyāghatāvadhirāśāṅkā—which means that we cannot go on doubting for ever, but must desist from doing so when it results in a self-contradiction in thought or leads to a practical absurdity. Such legitimate vyāptis are of two kinds. (i) \textit{Sphere of Causation}: We can for instance connect smoke always with fire. If anyone should question the correctness of the two being thus linked, we may point to its basis, viz. the law of causation. Smoke is caused by fire; and no one can maintain that an effect may come into being without its cause, for to do so would be to divest almost the whole of life's activity of its meaning. (ii) \textit{Sphere of Identity}:\(^2\) When we know for instance that a thing is a śimśupa, we know that it is a tree. A tree may or may not be a śimśupa; a śimśupa on the other hand must necessarily be a tree, for otherwise we shall be questioning the law of identity—a position as stultifying as the one referred to above. This constant relation between genus and species may be made the basis of a valid inference, provided we take care to see that what is inferred is not narrower than that from which it is inferred; for while it is right to conclude that a śimśupa is a tree, the conclusion when reversed is certainly wrong. Here, it will be seen, the predicate is obtained by analysing the subject and the conclusion, though trivial and so perhaps not always of much practical value, is necessarily true. According to the Buddhist then, amongst relations of succession, it is only that of cause and effect (tadutpatti) that warrants inductive generalization; and among relations of co-existence, it is only the identity of essence (tādātmya)

\(^1\) See Kusumānjali, iii. st. 7.
\(^2\) This should be regarded as stated only from the common standpoint and not as committing the Buddhist to the view that two or more things can have any common features.
that does so. He would not believe for instance in the proposition 'All animals with cloven hoofs have horns,' although the concomitance of the two, so far as our knowledge goes, is invariable; for its truth cannot, as in the cases mentioned, be referred back to any general principle whose validity is unquestioned. There is no clinching argument to meet the question 'Why should the cloven hoof be associated with horns?' and any doubt that may be entertained about the matter will, therefore, remain unremoved. In other words, the Buddhist admits the principle of the uniformity of nature only in the two spheres of causal sequence and necessary co-existence. By thus restricting the scope of vyaññi, he insists not only on the condition of invariable concomitance, but also on that of an inner necessity connecting the two terms of the relation. We shall see later that some Indian logicians were content with the first only of these two conditions.

It may be assumed that there is practical agreement in regard to this point among the several Buddhistic schools, but no express statement to that effect can be quoted. That inference is a pramāña, however, is admitted by all the Buddhists, though, as we shall see, it can have only a provisional value according to them. But they differ sharply from one another in respect of the view they hold of perception. In fact, according to Hindu writers, the division of Buddhistic thought into the four schools which alone they seem to recognize and with which we are concerned here is based chiefly upon the difference in this respect. To explain that difference, we may divide the four schools first into two classes—realistic and idealistic. The former which are Hinayāna believe in the existence of objects outside and independently of knowledge, though the objects according to the general postulate of Buddhism are conceived as momentary. The latter, on the other hand, which are Mahāyāna deny such objects altogether. Of the former, the Vaibhāṣikas¹ hold that objects are directly

¹ Vibhāṣā is the commentary on the Abhidharma books; and the Vaibhāṣikas were so called because they accepted this commentary as finally authoritative. The Sautrāntikas on the other hand were of
and the Sautrāntikas that they are known indirectly since according to the doctrine of momentariness objects cannot be present at the time they are perceived. If they are, they would endure for at least two instants—that when they served as the cause or stimulus of perception and that when they were actually perceived. If things are really momentary, it is only a past thing that can be perceived. So what is present externally when perception takes place is only the successor in the object-series in question of the member that served as its cause. The previous member, however, before it disappears, leaves its impression on the percipient mind; and it is from this impression or idea (ākāra) that we infer the prior existence of the corresponding object. Accordingly, though what is apprehended in perception actually exists, it is not apprehended at the moment when it exists. The explanation is similar to the one which modern science gives, for example, in the case of our seeing a star. Owing to the vastness of its distance from us, the rays proceeding from a star take a considerable time to reach us; and what we perceive, therefore, is not the star as it is at the moment of perception, but as it was at the moment when the rays left it. Thus the so-called perception really refers to the past and is in the nature of an inference. The star, for aught we know, may have disappeared in the interval. Analogous is all perception according to the Sautrāntika. It is not the object which we directly know, but rather its representation through which we indirectly come to know of it. In modern phraseology, the Sautrāntika view of perception involves the doctrine of representative ideas.

The Vaibhāṣika, who holds that objects are known directly, is able to dismiss the intervening psychic medium. His view agrees with the description of perception found in early Buddhistic writings, viz. that it is like fire produced by the rubbing of two sticks, which implies direct causation. They maintained that Buddha taught Abhidharma doctrines in certain Sūtras or Sūtrāntas and recognized their authority alone. Hence their name. See ERE: vol. xi. ‘Sautrāntika’ and BP. p. 155. BP. p. 53.
The chief objection which he urges against the Sautrāntika view is that it totally contradicts experience, which is to the effect that the object we perceive is present at the time. He adds also that if perception be abolished, there would be no inference. All inference is supported by a vyāpti or inductive truth which depends upon observation, and we cannot therefore make observation itself a form of inference. The latter argument seems to be somewhat wide of the mark, for the existence of the external object does not seem to be really a matter of inference according to the Sautrāntika, though it is described as anumeya. The statement that it is indirectly known only means that the object is postulated as a hypothesis to account for the fact of perception consistently with the doctrine of momentariness. So far from being a weak point in the doctrine, this way of solving the problem indicates great cautiousness in the Sautrāntika. Moreover, the Vaibhāṣika seems to take for granted that the object as perceived should be absolutely contemporaneous with the act of perception. But as a matter of fact the two must always be, at least slightly, separated in time; for light, to instance only visual perception, takes time to travel as also the transmission of a current along the optic nerve.

The criticism of the Sautrāntika view by the Vaibhāṣika does not signify that he believes in the truth of everything that is perceived and takes things at their face value. He, like the Sautrāntika, refuses to admit the distinction between substance and attribute; and there is no object, according to him also, of which anything may be predicated. Perceptual judgments, in all of which this distinction is found, are therefore necessarily wrong. When we see something and say or feel 'This is blue,' we are predicing blueness of 'this' (idam). It is perception as it is familiarly known, and is described as 'determinate' (savikalpaka). The position of both the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika is that it is erroneous. But it is not wholly so, for it contains a core of truth known as the sva-lakṣaṇa, which in the present case is the colour blue. It is the bare unrelated particular and is supposed to be given in an earlier stage of perception,

1 Cf. SV. pp. 283-4, st. 51 (com.).
described as 'indeterminate' (nirvikalpaka),\(^1\) which we may perhaps regard as mere sensation. Here the mind is passive; but in the next stage of determinate perception it becomes active leading to a subjective elaboration of the sva-lakṣaṇa and the consequent blurring of it, to speak from the metaphysical standpoint. Thus common perceptual experience is true only so far as the sva-lakṣaṇa is concerned. Whatever is associated with it then—all the conceptual elements or sāmānyā-lakṣaṇas as they are termed—whether a universal like cow-ness or an attribute like whiteness—is superposed by the mind (kalpanā) upon it and is not to be taken as an ontological fact.\(^2\) The particular alone is real, not the general. The latter is in fact as unrelated to the former as the name or verbal sign by which we refer to it. The general feature is nothing more than a working fiction, a convenient device in thinking. So the realism of the Vaibhaṣika, as that of the Sautrāntika, does not indicate the being of anything except the sva-lakṣaṇas; but while the one admits that a sva-lakṣaṇa is directly cognized, the other views it as known indirectly. Both alike endow the perceiving mind with a constructive side on account of which reality becomes vastly transformed when it is experienced. The resemblance between such a view and Kant's will be obvious to the student of Western philosophy. The Buddhistic realist also, like Kant, assumes a thing-in-itself (sva-lakṣaṇa) and explains the actual content of perception as the result of the mind imposing its own forms\(^3\) upon it. But the two views are not identical, since the Buddhist assumes that the sva-lakṣaṇa is known, whether directly or indirectly; and it is not, therefore, unknowable like Kant's 'thing-in-itself.' Reality is not only given but is also known. There is also the fact that the forms imposed by the mind upon it are not, as we shall see in the next section, exactly the same as they are in Kant's view.

Buddhistic idealism also is of two types: The first of them

\(^1\) These are respectively termed adhyāvasāya and grahaṇa (See SDS. p. 22), which names imply that the former is a judgment while the latter is bare sensation.

\(^2\) Cf. NM. pp. 93 and 303.

\(^3\) Kalpanā hi buddhi-viṣeṣaḥ: SV. p. 306 (com.).
is pure subjectivism; and the complicated explanation of
perception which the Sautrantika gave may be supposed to
have directly led to it. The followers of this view are known
as Yogācāra—a term whose significance is not very clear.¹
While, according to the two previous schools, knowledge
is true so far as the sva-lakṣaṇa is concerned and is false only
in respect of the conceptual elements involved in it, according
to the Yogācāra it is the sole truth and its whole content is
false. In fact in the triple factor commonly assumed wherever
experience arises—'knower,' 'known' and 'knowledge'—the
last alone is here taken to be true. There is neither subject
nor object but only a succession of ideas. The specific form
which cognition at any particular instant assumes is
determined in this view, not by an outside object presented
to it, but by past experience. That is, the stimulus always
comes from within, never from without. It is in no way
dependent upon objects existing outside, but is to be traced
to an impression (vāsanā) left behind by past experience, which
in its turn goes back to another impression, that to another
experience and so on indefinitely in a beginningless series. At
no particular stage in the series, it must be noted, is the
experience due to an external factor. In other words, the
ideas signify nothing but themselves. Since the Yogācāra
believes in the reality of nothing but these ideas (vijñāna), he
is also designated as vijñāna-vādin.

We may mention some of the main arguments by which
this extreme view is maintained.² First comes the obvious
analogy of dreams where experience arises without corre-
sponding objects, and internal thoughts appear as external.
The second argument is based upon the view which the
Yogācāra holds in common with the rest of the Buddhists
that cognition becomes aware of itself. In self-cognizing
cognition, we have a case in which what is known is identical
with what knows; and the Yogācāra argues that the same
may be the case in all experience, there being no reason
why an explanation which is not absurd in one case must be so
in another. In the awareness of a jar also, knowledge and the

¹ The Chinese rendering of the term suggests 'Yogācārya' as the
Sanskrit form. See BP. p. 243 n. ² Cf. Śaṅkara on VS. II. ii. 28.
known may be identical. All knowledge is thus only self-
knowledge and the distinction felt between jñāna and content
is a delusion, comparable to the single moon illusorily
appearing double. A third support which the Yogācāra cites
in favour of his view is the invariable association (sahopa-
lambha-niyama) existing between cognition and its content.
Thoughts and things always appear together; and neither
without the other. There is consequently no need to assume
that they are distinct, and they may well be viewed as
different phases of one and the same factor. Lastly, it is
argued that the so-called objects are seen to impress different
persons differently and even the same person at different
times—a circumstance which would be inexplicable if the
objects were real, each having its own defined character.¹
The arguments are much the same as those commonly
advanced whenever subjectivism is sought to be maintained,
except for the additional circumstance that everything is
conceived here as momentary. But they are by no means
convincing. To take the last of them as an example: It is
stated that objects of experience cannot have any intrinsic
nature, for no two persons agree in their perceptions of them.
The argument assumes not only that there is no agreement
whatever between one perceiver and another in this respect,
but also that when anything is presented, it must be appre-
hended precisely as it is. But it is forgotten that the content
apprehended may have a subjective side and may, at the
same time, point to a real object outside. Individual varia-
tions in the matter of perception do not, therefore, necessarily
mean the non-existence of external objects. Yet the Yogācāra
reasoning has a negative force which cannot be easily thrust
aside. They point to the indemonstrability of the opposite
view maintained in realism.

The second school of Buddhistic idealism which we have
to consider is known as the Mādhyamika.² In one sense it is

¹ Cf. SV. p. 286, st. 59. This argument is common to the two idealistic
schools of Buddhism.
² Strictly it is the followers of the school that are ‘Mādhyamikas,’
the doctrine itself being known as Mādhyamaka. See ERE. vol. viii.
‘Mādhyamaka.’ The term signifies an adherent of the ‘middle path,’
which is a distinctive feature of Buddhism. See p. 132 ante.
the most important outcome of Buddha's teaching and, at the same time, the most difficult to evaluate properly. The standpoint of the Mādhyamika in regard to knowledge is altogether novel. So far we have seen that some aspect of common experience is assumed to be true, all the three schools having taken for granted the subject-series at least as real. The Mādhyamika is quite revolutionary in his view and questions the validity of knowledge as a whole. He holds that if criticism of knowledge is necessary, it must be so in the case of all knowledge and that the validity of no part of it should be taken as self-evident. We commonly believe that we get into touch with reality through knowledge. When, however, we begin to inquire into the nature of this so-called reality, we discover that it is riddled with all sorts of self-discrepancies. Reflection at once shows its hollowness. 'No sooner are objects thought about than they are dissipated.'¹ What for instance is the nature of a jar which appears to be given in knowledge? If we ask ourselves whether it is an aggregate of parts or a whole, we are not able to maintain either position satisfactorily. For if it be an aggregate of parts, it should eventually be an aggregate of atoms; and an aggregate of invisible atoms must necessarily be invisible. If to avoid this difficulty we assume it to be an integral whole over and above its constituents, we shall be at a loss to explain satisfactorily the relation between the two. Similarly we cannot describe what passes for a real thing as either existent or non-existent. If a jar always exists, it is difficult to see why it needs to be made; and the efficiency of its maker becomes superfluous. If on the other hand we assume that it is at one time non-existent and then comes into existence, we shall be predicating both existence and non-existence of the same object whose nature for that reason becomes unintelligible. The only escape from such difficulties is to regard objects as having no intrinsic character (nissvabhāva)—a position which is diametrically opposed to that of the Svabhāva-vāda (p. 104). The same argument is extended to vijñāna, and it is also dismissed as devoid of self-essence or as a thing which is not in itself. This line of

¹ Yathā yathārthāscintyante viṣṇyante tathā tathā. SDS. p. 15.
reasoning leads the Madhyamika to conclude that, though knowledge serves the purposes of empirical life and so far may be valid or not as the case may be, it is impossible to attach any metaphysical significance to it. All knowledge, whether perceptual or inferred, is relative; and there is none that is absolutely true. He accordingly believes neither in outer reality nor in the inner; and his doctrine is therefore described as that of the void (śūnya-vāda). The unique method of establishing this position, though utilized by other thinkers also, seems to have originated with him. It may be described as the method of dichotomy and bears a resemblance to that adopted by Bradley in modern times. By the use of this method, he tries to show how the common concepts of philosophy are self-discrepant and are nothing more than dogmatic assumptions. In more than one chapter of his Kārikā, Nāgārjuna passes in review conceptions like 'motion,' showing how they are utterly unintelligible.

If perception and inference are both of provisional value for the Madhyamika, the latter is so for all the four schools alike; because, according to the Buddhistic doctrine, relations are all false and inference which is based upon a supposed relation between two terms cannot, therefore, be valid. Moreover, this pramāṇa, even according to the realistic schools, has reference only to the ideal constructions or sāmānya-lakṣaṇas, the sva-lakṣaṇas being the objects exclusively of pratyakṣa; and it can, therefore, lay claim to no final validity. Dinnāga says that the whole process of inference refers to what is imposed by thought and has no relation to external reality. As regards perception, the Yogācāra doctrine may be placed on the same footing as the Madhyamika, because it also refuses to recognize external objects. It no doubt admits vijñāna or 'momentary idea' to be real and as directly known; but it becomes aware of itself and is not, therefore, perception in the ordinary sense of the word. In the Sautrāntika view also the validity of perception cannot be absolute, for, as already explained, it postulates the external world as a mere hypothesis which,

1 Nyāya-bindu. ch. i. NM. p. 30.
2 See SV. p. 258, st. 168 (com.).
therefore, carries no certitude with it. It is only in the Vaibhāsika school which admits that external objects are real and are directly known that perception can claim any ultimate logical value.

The Buddhist recognizes only these two pramāṇas and brings others like verbal testimony (śabda) under inference. From this we should not understand that he discards tradition (p. 179). He only denies to it the logical status implied by designating it a pramāṇa. In this respect his view is at one with that of the Vaiśeṣika, to which we shall refer in the succeeding chapter.

It is clear from what has been said so far that the place which Buddhism assigns to jñāna is very precarious. Knowledge may have value for life, but its metaphysical significance is next to nothing. This position accounts for the Buddhistic criterion of truth, viz. that it consists in fitness to secure for us the object in question (prāpākatva).¹ That knowledge is true which confirms the expectation it raises. There is nothing strange about such a view in itself, and it has found supporters both in the East and the West. The peculiarity of the Buddhistic view lies in that the practical verification of knowledge which is possible is held to be only approximate. This is rendered necessary by the unusual way in which it conceives of reality. Even in the nirvikalpaka, where according to the Vaibhāsika a sva-lakṣaṇa is actually given, that very sva-lakṣaṇa cannot be reached for it ceases to be in a moment. So the utmost that knowledge can do is to direct us to the series of which the sva-lakṣaṇa cognized was a member. That is what is presented is a particular; but what is attained is not that particular but the corresponding series. This is what is meant by approximate verification. Such verification is held to be quite adequate to meet the demands of practical life, and the discrepancy that exists between knowledge and realization consequently passes unnoticed. Knowledge merely lights up, as it were, the path of action; and, so long as it successfully does so, it is regarded as true. And the analogy is given here of a person who sees only the lustre of a shining jewel, but mistaking it for the

¹ *Nyāya-bindu-śīhā*, p. 3; *NM.* p. 23.
jewel itself stretches forth his hand and happens to secure it.¹ In inference, the objects are invariably sāmānyalakṣaṇas, which are by hypothesis unreal. Yet it can be serviceable in life by leading us to an object-series with which its content is associated. Thus not only is the ultimate significance of knowledge little; its practical value also is of an indirect kind.

So much about truth. But knowledge may not be valid even in this restricted sense. A person through a defect of sight may see a patch of black where there is one of blue. It is error or illusion (viparyaya). Inference also may go wrong, for it may not comprehend the right sort of general features. Thus the validity of pramāṇas, even in the qualified sense in which it is understood, is not necessary and can be accepted only after verification. It is not, therefore, surprising that all knowledge should in the doctrine be described as presumably wrong and standing in need of validation by an external circumstance.² Postponing for the present the consideration of the question whether knowledge needs to be tested or not, we may indicate the distinction between the content of error and ideal constructions (kalpanā), both of which are alike unreal. The kalpanās are in their very nature false and are always found where perception takes place. They are in fact the necessary condition of perception as ordinarily known—the frame into which the mind fits reality as it apprehends it. But errors are occasional and affect only individual percipients. Moreover, the former are classifiable, unlike the content of illusions, into definite groups. They may be described in Kantian terminology as forms of the mind. What these groups or categories are, we shall see later.

II

In dealing with their theories of knowledge, we have to a large extent anticipated the ontological views of the four Buddhistic schools. It is still desirable to bring together the

¹ SDS. p. 23.
² Aprāmāṇyam svatah: prāmāṇyam parataḥ. SDS. p. 129.
statements already made, filling them out where necessary with details so that we may have a connected idea of the world-view of each school. The distinguishing features of primitive Buddhism were (1) its belief that everything is a flux (saṃtāna), and (2) its belief that everything is an aggregate altogether lacking self (saṃghāta). These features continue to characterize the teaching in the present stage also; but naturally they receive greater emphasis and are more formally enunciated. We shall add a few words on the former of these, viz. the doctrine of momentariness.

Change is ordinarily understood to imply something that endures through it. If we represent a changing object by $XA$, it becomes, according to the common view, $XB$ under certain conditions, where $X$ stands for the element common to the two phases. This view that a changing object persists amidst varying features does not commend itself to the Buddhist; and he maintains that all change is necessarily *total*. That is, change means revolution, not evolution. His arguments are as follows: In the example given above, if the conditions bringing about the change alter $A$ to $B$ without at all affecting $X$, then $X$ is merely a conventional adjunct of $A$; and it may well be dispensed with as superfluous. The result is that $A$ becomes $B$, and we have total change. If on the other hand we assume that the conditions in question do affect $X$, altering it thereby, it is again total change, for we now have $YB$ as the result in place of $XA$, and not $XB$ as supposed. To express the same more generally, the ordinary view of change is based upon the supposition that Being may be related to Becoming while the Buddhist altogether denies the possibility of such a relation. In his view there is no Being at all, and the only reality is Becoming. Change is not only total; it is also *perpetual*. This follows directly from the conception of reality entertained in the system, viz. that it consists in causal efficiency or the capacity to effect something. A seed for example causes the shoot and, according to the principle of total change, it then becomes wholly different without any the least part of what was the seed surviving in it (niranjaya-nāsa). Its capacity as a seed to produce the shoot must manifest itself at once, for otherwise
we shall have prolonged or suspended efficiency which Buddhism describes as a contradiction in terms. That a thing should be capable of producing something and yet should not produce it or do so only bit by bit, is inconceivable. Potentiality is only another expression for lack of efficiency; and the distinction between 'can' and 'does' is fictitious. It should, therefore, be admitted that whatever capacity a thing has, is at once and fully manifested; and since a thing is, only when it acts, it must be momentary. Yat sat tat kṣaṇīkam.†

If now in the light of this view that practical efficiency or 'the pulse of the moment' is the sole test of reality, we consider the same seed in the instants previous to its becoming a shoot, we should agree to associate it in those instants also with some sort of activity; for, if it then be idle and do nothing, it will be unreal and cannot give rise to a positive something—the shoot. The only way to think of it as active in each of those instants is to take it as producing its like in the next instant. The seed is thus never inactive. The difference when it becomes a shoot instead of continuing as a seed, is that the nature of the series is altered; but the one series is as much a flux as the other. The theory gives us, instead of a static seed which at some stage is transformed into a shoot, a seed-series which is replaced by a shoot-series when certain new conditions make their appearance. This causal efficiency is described in Sanskrit as artha-kriyā-kārītva, which may be taken as equivalent to 'making become.' The same conclusion is reached by showing that no extraneous causes are necessary for destroying a thing.‡

The germs of destruction are inherent in every object, which cannot, therefore, last beyond one instant. What are ordinarily regarded as the causes of destruction such as a stick in the case of breaking a jar, it is explained, give rise to a different series—that of the potsherd; for there is no meaning in speaking of non-existence (abhāva) being brought about. If a thing does not annihilate itself, nothing else can do it; and if it does not end itself in the instant following its appearance, there is no reason on earth why it should disappear at all at any time. Hence if things are not momentary, *SDS. pp. 9–12; NM. pp. 444 ff.*

*NM. pp. 447–8.*
every one of them will have to be eternal—a conclusion which is accepted by none.

This conception of reality is criticized in several ways by the exponents of the other Indian systems. If everything be a flux and is being continually renovated, no recognition would be possible. The Buddhist meets this objection, as briefly remarked before (p. 145), by explaining away recognition. It is according to him not a single piece of knowledge at all, but a compound of memory and perception; and what we apprehend in it is not one object as we commonly assume, but two distinct ones though both are members of the same series. How can the same object, he asks, appear in two different temporal settings? In other words, the things in the two moments are only similar, and similarity is mistaken for identity in recognition. He admits that our feeling, then, is that we perceive the same thing which we did once before, as is implied in the conative response resulting from recognition; but he explains the feeling as a mere delusion. He cites in illustration the example of the lamp-flame where, if recognition were valid, the identity of the flame-material in two different moments, which though ordinarily assumed is known to be false, would be established. All recognition involves a reference to past time which perception is not competent to apprehend as well as to present time which memory cannot refer to. To regard it as a single unit of knowledge, overlooking its hybrid character, is clearly erroneous. The main argument of the critics of this view is based upon the postulate that the invalidity of knowledge is established by its being contradicted by other knowledge which is better supported. In the case of the lamp-flame that has been mentioned as an illustration, the gradual consumption of the oil, for example, is a sign that the flame-material is not the same in any two stages. But no such indication exists in regard to everything. Rather inquiry in other cases generally confirms the identity of the thing. What the lamp-flame illustrates is only that recognition is not always true. That, indeed, is so in the case of all knowledge. The definition of the real as the 'causally efficient' is also criticized. Though

commonly, according to Buddhism, a series never ends, but may only be transformed into another as in the case of the seed becoming the shoot, certain exceptions are admitted of which one is the cessation of the ego-series (pratisamkhyā-nirodha) when an arhat dies and attains nirvāṇa. Here the question arises as to whether the final member of the ego-series in question is real or not. Since by hypothesis it gives rise to no successor, it is not causally efficient and cannot, therefore, be real. And if that is unreal, it must follow that the next previous one is unreal and so on backwards until the whole series disappears as a figment, with the result that either the ideal of nirvāṇa should be given up as never achievable or the ego-series representing the aspirant for nirvāṇa should be admitted as absolutely non-existent.

These are specimens of the arguments advanced in Hindu philosophical works against the Buddhistic doctrine of momentariness. They are ingenious, though they are not all convincing; and it is not necessary to mention more of them here. The chief argument to refute the Buddhistic position in this respect, it seems, should be based upon quite a distinct consideration. According to modern science, the present is to be regarded as a duration. The duration may be of any breadth, but the point to be noted is that it is never a mere instant. This truth, it may be added, was not unknown to old Indian thinkers and we sometimes find allusions to it in Sanskrit philosophical works. The Buddhist supposes that what is given in perception is the instantaneous present. In fact, one of the arguments for the doctrine of momentariness is based upon the assumption that perception is necessarily confined to the present instant. The Buddhist does not admit time as a reality; and it may, therefore, appear as not legitimate to speak of any ‘instant’ in criticizing

1 Cf. Śaṅkara on VS. II. ii. 22.
5 NM. p. 450.
his position. But he accepts a momentary thing or state as representing the ultimate stage when the things of experience are analysed, which is equivalent to the admission of an instantaneous present. He only substitutes for a minimal time a minimal real, which is open to exactly the same criticism. So our reference to it in terms of time, while it facilitates exposition, does not affect the theory. The duration of the present may be reduced to any extent, but it will always remain a duration, however small, with its own boundary moments so to say. The absolute instant is only a limiting concept—an ideal of thought and not an actual existent. To base an ontological theory upon such an abstraction is not right; and it is for this reason that the Buddhist view of change, however subtle in itself, fails to convince us. This criticism may be said to receive support from the history of the Buddhistic doctrine itself. For Buddha did not think that things were momentary. He was content with the conclusion that they were impermanent (p. 144). It was his followers that in later times devised this novel theory which has all the merits and all the defects of a purely speculative solution.

Of the four schools of Buddhism, the Vaibhāṣika may be described as pluralistic realism. It believes in the existence of an indefinite number of fleeting sva-lakṣaṇas and regards them as the only basis of the external world. They are all diverse with no principle of unity underlying them. That is the reason why they are called sva-lakṣaṇas, a term which signifies that every one of them is unique and can be described only as itself. Each sva-lakṣaṇa is produced by the preceding one in its series and gives rise in its turn to the succeeding one in the same series; but it is otherwise absolutely independent and relationless. Since these sva-lakṣaṇas are supposed to be apprehended directly by the senses, they may be represented as the material of bare sensation. When they are perceived, they are invariably accompanied by certain subjective determinations (kalpanā), which are divided into five classes—generality (jātī), quality (guṇa).

1 Svam asādhaarāṇam lakṣaṇam tattvam sva-lakṣaṇam: Nyāya-bindu-fikā, p. 15.
2 Cf. NM. p. 30.
action (karma), name (nāma) and substance (dravya) or, to state the same differently, relation to other substances.\textsuperscript{1} We may call them ‘categories,’ but we should remember that they are only categories of thought. Everything that appears to us appears through their medium—not as mere sva-lakṣaṇa, but as a thing belonging to a class or bearing a name, as a substance characterized by an attribute or related to another substance. Thus perception includes much more than what is actually presented to the senses. The additions are not material attributes, but only mental forms which are superimposed ready-made on the sva-lakṣaṇa. Though thus imaginary they are of the utmost importance to practical life, for it is through the discrimination and agreement between one thing and another, which by their aid we are able to make, that we carry on our everyday activities. Time and space also are equally mental devices and no sva-lakṣaṇa in itself has either extension or duration,\textsuperscript{2} but they are not reckoned separately because their conception is relational and are, therefore, already included under the last category.

So far we have considered the external world as it is presented to us. It is largely subjective though based on reality; and the realism of the doctrine is therefore far from naïve. The sva-lakṣaṇas of which we have spoken, however, are not ultimate, but are constituted of certain primary elements and are, therefore, all secondary. The ultimate elements of reality or the bhūtas, already alluded to (p. 146), are described as atoms so that the world-conception of the Vaibhāṣika may be taken as atomistic. But by ‘atom,’ in this case, we should not understand an enduring thing\textsuperscript{3} as

\textsuperscript{1} NM. p. 93-4. See Prof. H. N. Randle: \textit{Fragments from Diśnāga}, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{2} NM. pp. 450-1; Prof. Stcherbatsky: \textit{The Conception of Buddhistic Nirvāṇa}, p. 142 n.

\textsuperscript{3} This is said from the standpoint of Hindu works. Compare, for example, Śaṅkara on VS. II. ii. 22, where a passage is cited to show that all positive things are momentary. According to some modern works dealing with Buddhism, these fundamental factors are permanent and unchanging, though everything derived from them is unstable and changing. Such a doctrine, though perhaps placing
in the Jaina or Vaiṣeṣika doctrine. As regards the inner world of mind, a parallel classification is adopted with citta and caitta corresponding to bhūta and bhautika. Of the five skandhas, which together stand for personality (p. 139), the vijñāna-skandha is what is known as citta; and the other four are explained as caitta or 'derived from citta.' The idea is that self-consciousness as a succession of momentary ideas is fundamental and that the other psychical features are modifications which show themselves therein. They depend not merely on outside factors presented at the time, but also on the predispositions of the individual so that in mental life the past has always a very important part to play in determining the present. While the description as caitta is quite intelligible in the case of feeling (vedanā), perception (samjñā) and mental dispositions (saṃskāra), it presents a difficulty in regard to rūpa-skandha because it stands for the material frame and cannot, therefore, be represented as psychical. The difficulty is noticed by Hindu writers and their explanation is that matter, in so far as it constitutes the senses which are the apparatus of thought, may justifiably be included in the knowing subject. Or perhaps, we should say, its inclusion implies a view of personality which comprehends within it not only the mind and its organs, but also that aspect of the physical universe which the individual perceives and which, being relative to his ends, may be regarded as his world.

An obvious criticism of the Vaibhāṣika world-view is that a sva-lakṣaṇa of the kind in which it believes is as good as nothing and may as well be dispensed with. It is, as the exponents of the other Indian systems point out, an unwarranted addition of which really nothing can be said or known. The Vaibhāṣika no doubt claims for it knowability; but its knowledge, as Uddyotakara puts it, resembles 'a dumb man's dream.' The doctrine however, so far as it the Vaibhāṣika view on a more secure basis, would remove it very far from the spirit of early Buddhism, which insists upon change being fundamental. Cf. Aristotelian Society Proceedings (1919–20), p. 161.

1 NM. p. 74; PP. p. 48.  
2 Cf. Bhāmati, II. ii. 18.  
3 Cf. Prof. Stcherbatsky: Central Conception of Buddhism, p. 7.  
4 Mūka-svapna-sadṛśam: NV. p. 43.
retains belief in an external world, is more loyal to the old teaching than the subjectivism of the Yogācāra, though it also marks a departure in the investigation for its own sake of objective reality. The inquiry here is not merely practical and psychological as in primitive Buddhism, but also logical and metaphysical or, to express it in a different way, the study of matter now comes to be added to the study of man. The Vaibhāṣīka, like the rest of the Buddhists, has attempted to work out the implications of Gotama’s teaching, but seems to have stopped short at the penultimate stage lest he should do violence to it, while the other schools have carried on the investigation farther. One unsatisfactory character of the doctrine, viewed by itself and not in relation to its traditional basis, is due to the attempt it makes to think of reality after abolishing time and space from the objective sphere. Its dimensionless sva-lakṣaṇaś can have no verity about them. Herein lies its chief weakness which should have suggested to the Yogācāra the doctrine of pure subjectivism. As regards the Buddhistic view of the conceptual elements or sāmānyā-lakṣaṇaś also, criticisms are met with in Hindu philosophical works; but the criticisms are often based upon postulates which differ in different systems and not on such as are equally acceptable to them all. In the case of ‘generality’ (jātī), for example, the Hindu schools themselves disagree—some taking it as objectively real and others regarding it as only a concept conveniently holding together the features common to several objects. It would accordingly be more convenient to postpone whatever criticisms we have to offer on this aspect of the Vaibhāṣīka doctrine to the later chapters dealing with those systems.

There is not much to be said about the next two schools. The Sautrāntika position is identical with that of the Vaibhāṣīka, except that instead of dogmatically asserting the existence of sva-lakṣaṇaś, it only admits them as a hypothesis to account for experience. It probably marks a conscious advance on the Vaibhāṣīka, as the latter is known to have preceded the Sautrāntika in the systematization of its doctrine.¹ The Yogācāra view is essentially different; but

¹ See ERE. vol. xi. p. 213.
it is more consistent inasmuch as it explains the whole of the external world as a creation of the mind and thus abolishes the logical distinction between the sva-lakṣaṇa and the sāmānya-lakṣaṇa. If, as stated by the Sautrāntika, the image or idea is a necessary link between the mind and its object, there is no need to assume the object, provided we otherwise account for the appearance of its image or idea in the mind; and that is just the view which the Yogācāra takes. He abolishes what according to the Sautrāntika is the hypothetical outer circle by assuming that the mind itself can generate the respective ideas. Objects according to the Yogācāra are not accordingly encountered by the mind, but are created by it. In this doctrine, we have not only to explain generality, quality, etc., as subjective, but also the concept of externality itself, the only reality admitted being vijñāna which is ‘internal,’ if the word can be used at all when nothing outside is recognized. In the case of each vijñāna, we must assume the fictitious diversification of ‘knower,’ ‘knowledge’ and ‘known,’ so that the subject and the object are only aspects of vijñāna or knowledge itself. So far as the evidence of Hindu philosophical works goes, the presumption is that the number of vijñāna-series is unlimited; and the doctrine, though idealistic, is pluralistic. But the position that ‘externality’ is merely a mental construct, if strictly adhered to, renders the recognition of more than one self impossible and we shall be led into solipsism. But even then the plurality of selves would be granted on the empirical plane to explain life and its common activities on the analogy of dreams. There is no evidence in Sanskrit works to show that such a position was actually reached in the Yogācāra school. But there are indications, on the other hand, that by some among its adherents a cosmic or absolute vijñāna-series was postulated of which everything was regarded as but an appearance. Thus we find the doctrine described as Vijñānādvaita and classed with

1 See Guṇaratna on Šaṇḍārśana-samuccaya, st. 56. Tarhi bahirarthavat sva-jñāna-saṃtānāt anyāni saṃtānāntarānyapi viśīryeran.
2 See e.g. Vidyāraṇya: Vivaraṇa-prameya-samgraha, p. 80.
3 Cf. NM. pp. 526 and 537.
monistic doctrines like the Ātmādvaita of Śaṅkara. The absolutistic development which the doctrine underwent outside India was thus already known to Buddhism in its Indian form and was not, therefore, peculiar to its extra-Indian history. Its very character suggests Upaniṣadic influence; but this ultimate vijñāna also, it should not be forgotten, is only Becoming.

The last school we have to consider is the Mādhyamika, which believes in no reality whatsoever, and is therefore described as sūnya-vāda. Its general position is one of complete distrust in knowledge, so far as metaphysics is concerned, and is reached by scrutinizing the things of common experience and showing that the scrutiny leads nowhere. This will be best indicated by explaining how the old conception of pratītya-samutpāda (p. 143) is interpreted here. The other Buddhistic schools believe in things originating, though their view of causation is quite singular. The Mādhyamika denies the possibility of origination itself. The very first verse of Nāgārjuna's Kārikā tries to unsettle the notion by subjecting it to the test of a negative logic. 'Nothing exists anywhere, whether we conceive of it as born of itself or of others, or of both or of no cause whatsoever.' It means that the notion of causation is an illusion; and, since the doctrine of Buddha admits nothing that is uncaused, the whole universe must be illusory. The teaching is thus entirely negative. All experience is a delusion\(^1\); and the world, a tissue of false things falsely related. It is illustrated by citing the case of the mock-elephant by which Udayana, the adventurous hero of Indian folk-lore, was undone.\(^2\) This view, it is maintained, is not inconsistent with the relative or provisional reality (saṁvṛti-satya) of the common things of experience. They are all real so far as empirical purposes go, but they vanish like mist when they are subjected to philosophic investigation. They may be intelligible from a practical standpoint, but they altogether fail to satisfy a philosophic criterion, being wholly of a self-discrepant nature.

It may be pointed out how small, in spite of this extreme

\(^1\) Anubhava eṣa mṛṣā: Nāgārjuna's Kārikā (C. Petersburg Edn.), com. p. 58.  
\(^2\) Id. xiii. 1, com.
position of the Mādhyamika, is its difference from the remaining three schools. According to all of them alike, common knowledge contains elements which are superimposed by the mind. Thus general features like cow-ness have no objective reality according to any of them and are entirely due to the nature of thought. In the Yogācāra school, this illusory character is ascribed to the whole of the physical world. That is, scholastic Buddhism as a whole regards the greater part of common knowledge as only conventionally true. The Mādhyamika merely extends this principle to all experience. But it may be asked whether the system is altogether devoid of the notion of a positive ultimate. Our object here being chiefly to present later Buddhism as it was understood by Hindu thinkers and is found set forth in their works, it is easy to answer this question; for they all alike agree in holding that the void is the only truth according to the Mādhyamika. They describe the school as nihilistic and have no difficulty in refuting that apparently absurd position. Some even go so far as to say that such a view needs no serious refutation, because it stands self-condemned. It may appear to us that the negation of everything is inconceivable without implying a positive ground (avadhi) thereby, and that the ultimate truth cannot therefore be the void. Nothing can be proved false, if nothing is taken as true. That is the very criticism of Hindu philosophers passed on the Mādhyamika. So we cannot doubt that in their view the Mādhyamika was a nihilist in the literal sense of the term. It would seem that

1 Cf. Śaṅkara on VS. II. ii. 31 and on Br. Up. p. 577.
2 See e.g. Bhāmati. II. ii. 31. The Mādhyamika shows great impatience at this criticism and characterizes the critic as obsessed to an incurable extent in favour of the positive. Candrakirti ridicules him by comparing him to a person who, when told that he would get nothing, expected that 'nothing' would actually be given to him. See com. on Nāgārjuna's Kārikā, xiii. 8.
3 The only other conclusion that can be drawn from the references to the doctrine in Hindu philosophical works is that the Mādhyamika was concerned solely with showing that the several explanations given of the world by the others were untenable, but that he had no solution of his own to offer about it. This is the significance of the term Vaitāṇḍika applied to him sometimes.
this view is not different from the one held by the Mādhyamika himself, at least in one stage in the history of the doctrine, if we may judge from certain statements appearing in Buddhistic works. To mention only one such statement: When the charge of nihilism is brought against his view, Candrakīrti, the seventh-century commentator on Nāgārjuna’s Kārikā, instead of trying to repel that charge merely points out that the doctrine is different from common or vulgar nihilism.¹ From this it is clear that the Mādhyamika view also is negative, though it may not be identical with nihilism as ordinarily understood. It differs from the other, it is stated, in that its negation is the result of a logical scrutiny of experience and is not merely a dogmatic or whimsical denial. The difference is illustrated by comparing the Mādhyamika to a witness who speaks in a court of law against a thief, fully knowing that he has committed the theft; and the common nihilist, to one who also speaks against the thief and who, though not uttering a falsehood, is speaking not from knowledge, but through some bias or other. The belief among some modern scholars is that the Mādhyamika could not really have been a nihilist and that he also believed in a positive something as the Ultimate, the word śūnya applied to it only meaning that it is as nothing from the empirical standpoint.² But we cannot with the evidence available in Hindu philosophical literature reach such a conclusion. Not the Hindus alone, but the Jains also,³ we may add, hold the Mādhyamika to be a nihilist.

III

It has been observed that while school after school of epistemological and ontological inquiry arose, the Buddhistic practical teaching remained almost unchanged. That may be true of Hinayānism, but not of Mahāyānism. The belief that all is suffering and that pleasure itself is ‘attenuated

¹ Nāgārjuna’s Kārikā, xviii. 7, com. ² See e.g. IP. vol. i. pp. 662-6. ³ Cf. Pramāṇa-naya-tattvālokālaṁkāra, i. 15, com. Sarva-śūnyataiva param tattvam. (Benares Edn.) See also Pramcya-kamala-mārtanda, p. 25. (Nirnaya Sāg. Pr.)
pain' continues to characterize the latter doctrine as also the belief that right knowledge is the means of overcoming it. The course of discipline laid down for the attainment of nirvāṇa is also the same as before—partly moral and partly intellectual. But the conception of the ideal of life becomes vastly transformed. There had all along been the two ideals (p. 114) of action (pravṛtti) and of contemplation (nivṛtti). Like so many other heretical doctrines Hīnayānism adopted the latter, while Mahāyānism, largely under the influence of Hindu thought, modelled its practical teaching on the former. Although saving oneself still continues to be the aim of life, it ceases to be commended for its own sake and comes to be regarded as but a qualification to strive for the salvation of others. This is the ideal of the Bodhisattva as distinguished from that of the arhat of the Hīnayāna schools. The Bodhisattva, having perfected himself, renounces his own salvation to work for the spiritual good of others. He is not content with his own enlightenment or Buddha-hood, but yearns to help his suffering fellow-creatures, and is ready for any sacrifice on their account. In fact, self-sacrificing love or disinterested activity may be described as the chief spring of Mahāyānism. Thus Nāgārjuna before his birth, it is believed, was a deva living in a happy world and came down to the earth to spread the great teaching of Buddha. The same spirit is abundantly illustrated in the Jātaka stories, which profess to recount the doings of Buddha in his former lives. The altruistic aim was so prominent a feature of Māhāyanism that we find poets and dramatists laying special stress on it when characters that have come under the influence of that doctrine are introduced. Thus in the Nāgānanda,¹ a Sanskrit play of the seventh century A.D., which dramatizes a Buddhistic legendi the hero censures the saint who flees from the world seeking his own peace: 'A hermit is no doubt happy in the forest—with the meadow for his bed, the white rock for his couch, the shady tree for his dwelling, the cool water of the cascade for his drink, roots for his food and the deer for his companions. Yet there is one drawback in such a life. Being all lonely, it

¹ Act iv. 2. Cf. also Bhavabhūti's Mālati-mādhava, x. 21.
gives no scope for helping fellow-men and is therefore led to no purpose.’ In this connection also comes about a great change in the Buddhistic view of karma; and the rigour of the law that one can under no circumstances escape from reaping the fruit of what one has done is mitigated by the belief that a Bodhisattva can transfer his good deeds to others or ‘turn them over’ (parivarta) to them, thus helping them in their struggle for freedom from suffering. All his merit (punya) he can thus dedicate to the saving of his fellow-beings. Whatever may be said of such transfer from the strictly ethical standpoint, this new feature is not without its special religious appeal; and it prompts the devout, in its turn, to an act of absolute self-surrender (bhakti) to the lofty-minded and compassionate Bodhisattva. There are other changes also, like the deification of Buddha, whose influence on practical life is great; but such developments of later Buddhism, however interesting, are outside our purview and need not detain us now.